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Chairman: Ms. Wensley ..... (Australia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 121: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*) (A/54/6/Rev.1 (vol. II), A/54/7 and A/54/16)

Section 8. Legal affairs

1. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that he supported the activities of the Office of Legal Affairs and that he welcomed the fact that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had requested the Board of Auditors to conduct a specific examination of practices and procedures with regard to the handling of arbitration/claims cases by the United Nations administration (A/54/7, para. III.18).

2. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that the guidance which the Office of Legal Affairs provided to the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies was very important. Cuba would like to know what theme would be addressed by the new special rapporteur referred to in paragraph 8.19 and in what context the General Assembly had decided to establish that post. It also asked the Secretariat to identify the four regional legal intergovernmental bodies with which the International Law Commission had established links of cooperation, as mentioned at the end of paragraph 8.20.

3. Cuba noted, from table 8.7, that no extrabudgetary resources had been projected, and asked for clarification in that regard. Table 8.8, which summarized the requirements of subprogramme 1, showed an increase in the resources allocated for consultants and experts; it was important to specify the activities to be carried out by such consultants and experts.

4. Cuba found it hard to understand the references, in paragraph 8.40, to the creation of legal regimes contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security and the provision of advice with a view to ensuring the smooth operation of elections. At the end of paragraph 8.44, it was stated that resources were being included for travel in connection with peacekeeping missions. The Secretariat should ascertain whether those resources had been incorporated into the support account and, if not, why they had been included under that item and not in the support account. Cuba also asked the Secretariat to specify how the General Legal Division would participate in the reform of human resources management, as mentioned in paragraph 8.51.

5. **Mr. Kondo** (Japan) said that he, too, would like an answer to Cuba's question on the new special rapporteur, since the Secretariat's intentions were not clear.

6. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that most of the questions posed would be answered in writing.

7. With respect to extrabudgetary resources for travel, table 8.1 indicated that, for the entire Office of Legal Affairs, an amount of about $779,000 was being requested from the support account. Most of that amount was to fund posts for backstopping peacekeeping operations; however, there were also backstopping needs of an ongoing nature that continued to be funded from the regular budget, and it was those requirements which had prompted the request in paragraph 8.44. The amount mentioned was for subprogramme 1 as a whole.

8. With respect to consultants, information would be obtained on the use of resources in the current biennium, since the same level was being maintained for the next biennium, and efforts would be made to provide information on the activities envisaged in that connection.

Section 9. Economic and social affairs

9. **Mr. Sareva** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and, in addition, Norway, said that the European Union's support for sustainable development was well known. Two years earlier, the European Union had supported the merging of three departments into the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs; currently, it was essential to make the best possible use of resources in all sections to obtain the results desired by the beneficiaries. In that connection, the inclusion in the programme budget of statements of expected accomplishments would help to promote transparency. In the future, however, such statements would have to be further refined and methods of evaluation would have to be developed.

10. Specifically, the European Union concurred with the Advisory Committee's observations on the use of

temporary assistance (existing staff services should be used to the fullest extent possible in all subprogrammes); the cost of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs (in future, the full cost must be disclosed, regardless of the source of funding); the use of consultants (all budget sections must indicate the funds that might have to be used for consultants, but such use was justified only when the requisite expertise was not available within the Secretariat); and travel expenses (as contained in document A/54/7, paras. 96 and IV.15).

11. The European Union also agreed with the Advisory Committee that legislative bodies should be more involved in reviewing work programmes, including publications. Lastly, the activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service should be strengthened, particularly in the light of the continuing increase in the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

12. **Mr. Kondo** (Japan) said that, as the largest donor of official development assistance among the countries members of the Development Assistance Committee, Japan attached great importance to United Nations activities in the field of cooperation and, in view of the importance of multilateral cooperation, made efforts to increase the effectiveness of United Nations bodies in that field.

13. With respect to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Japan had noted, as had the Advisory Committee, that staff costs for the biennium 2000-2001 had been calculated using a vacancy factor of 5 per cent and 2.5 per cent for Professional and General Service posts, respectively. The Department should step up its recruitment activities to ensure the orderly implementation of mandates.

14. With respect to the increasing use of short-term staff and consultants and experts, although it was clear that the increase in the number of international conferences entailed a higher volume of work, the Department should further review resource distribution with a view to transferring existing resources to the subprogrammes that needed them. The Department should also review the background documents produced for the Commission on Sustainable Development, since many members of the Commission felt that the documentation was too voluminous and difficult to use in the deliberations.

15. Lastly, he asked why travel expenses had increased even though the number of posts had decreased. More information was needed to justify the 134-per-cent increase.

16. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that he supported the strengthening of the Organization's role in promoting international cooperation for development. In his delegation's view, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should assist Member States with their national policies aimed at the promotion of economic growth and sustainable development. Priority should be given to the special needs of Africa and least developed countries, small island developing States, South-South cooperation and financing for development. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs should implement all the activities included in its programme of work. It should also continue to use traditional means of dissemination for the benefit of countries not in a position to use electronic means.

17. Algeria endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) with respect to the integration of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 into the work of the United Nations system and the need to provide adequate resources to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. Moreover, it agreed with the Advisory Committee that the cost of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs was not transparent. Lastly, Algeria felt that technical cooperation and coordination activities should be carried out by permanent staff.

18. **Mr. Nee** (United States of America) said that, in the coming biennium, the Member States would follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and review the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. For that purpose, the budget included requests for a number of new and non-recurrent provisions: $370,000 for temporary assistance, $307,900 for consultants and experts and $60,000 for contractual services. It was probable that, in the current biennium, the same type of expenditure had been incurred in relation to the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, yet no special provisions had been requested. It was therefore surprising that those new and non-recurrent provisions had been requested for the coming biennium.

19. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was no longer responsible for providing the interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to

Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. That meant that an additional $6.9 million would become available in relation to the current biennium. The budget for the biennium 2000-2001 represented a real increase of $7.26 million. The United States delegation would like the Secretariat to provide a detailed breakdown of the redistribution of the $6.9 million that had become available.

20. Lastly, the United States delegation wished to point out that section 9 of the budget contained provisions for activities which had not been approved. For example, in paragraph 9.40, an amount of $292,400 was requested to cover the costs of two sessions of the Committee for Development Policy. Since that body was supposed to meet only once a year, that figure should be reduced by half. In paragraph 9.86, provisions were requested for the follow-up to the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes. That activity had not been approved by the General Assembly, nor had the review of tax competition between countries included among the proposed requirements mentioned in paragraph 9.93.

21. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the United Nations must remain at the forefront of world events and must support the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, whose aim was to promote the development of the developing countries and to support intergovernmental processes in the economic and social fields.

22. Considering that three departments had been merged into one, it was important to determine, at the current stage, how the Secretariat was implementing technical cooperation activities; how many staff members dealt with technical cooperation, broken down by subprogramme; and how the budget for the biennium 2000-2001 reflected the lessons learned from the merging of the three departments.

23. The Group of 77 and China believed that the most convincing way in which the United Nations could demonstrate its interest in promoting economic and social development was by providing adequate resources for the full implementation of development activities, especially in view of the 9-per-cent reduction in extrabudgetary resources. The nominal increase under section 9 of the budget was not commensurate with the priority which the General Assembly assigned to economic and social development.

24. The Group of 77 and China were concerned to note that, as the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph IV.5 of its report, vacancy rates had stood at 14.6 per cent for posts in the Professional category and 0.9 per cent for posts in the General Service category as of the end of April 1999. The Department should take urgent action to recruit the necessary staff.

25. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines) said that she associated herself with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and that her delegation reaffirmed its support for the Organization's important role in promoting international cooperation for development in the economic, social, environmental and other fields, especially in the context of globalization and interdependence. It therefore supported activities under section 9 that were aimed at promoting the sustained economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries, which was one of the priority areas of the revised medium-term plan for 1998-2001. The Philippines supported the proposed resource increase of 0.3 per cent under that budget section.

26. She was pleased to note, from paragraph 9.4, that particular attention would be paid, *inter alia*, to the need to incorporate a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The Philippines attached particular importance to subprogramme 2 on gender issues and advancement of women, and therefore fully supported the proposed 2.1-per-cent increase in resources for that subprogramme.

27. It was encouraging to note that paragraph 9.75 mentioned the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat as one of the expected accomplishments. The Secretary-General should intensify his efforts to improve the representation of women from developing countries in senior posts. She noted that the competitive examination for promotion to the Professional category of staff members from other categories (G to P examination) was currently the only means by which General Service staff, the majority of whom were women, could be promoted to the Professional category. She hoped that the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Focal Point for Women would continue to study the issue in close cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management and that the Committee would take steps to ensure equal opportunity for all

staff members of all nationalities in the General Service category.

28. Her delegation attached particular importance to subprogramme 7 on global development trends, issues and policies, especially in the light of the difficult economic and financial situation in some parts of the world. It welcomed the subprogramme's attention to longer-term development trends and questions, including systemic issues such as the functioning, sustainability, stability, transparency and equity of the global economic system. It also supported activities relating to financing for development.

29. Her delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 181 and 182 of the report of CPC.

30. **Mr. Daka** (Zambia) said that he strongly supported the activities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; however, in relation to the increase in the vacancy rate between 1998 and 1999, referred to in paragraph IV.5 of the Advisory Committee's report, he would like to know what steps had been taken to redress that situation.

31. **Mr. Mazemo** (Zimbabwe) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the Guyanese delegation on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and that, like the Algerian delegation, he supported the recommendations of CPC concerning the integration of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 into the activities supervised by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He hoped that the Department would conduct more supervisory activities together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to expedite the Programme's implementation.

32. His delegation was concerned to note the observation, contained in the Advisory Committee's report, that two thirds of the resources under section 9 came from extrabudgetary sources. The regular budget should be increased to cover all administrative and support costs and to free up extrabudgetary resources that could then be allocated to the field activities of the various programmes. However, until such time as the situation was rectified, extrabudgetary resources must continue to be provided to make up for the lack of regular budget resources.

33. He shared the concern expressed by the Zambian delegation with respect to the vacancy rate in the Professional category, and asked what progress had been made to date.

34. **Mr. Zhou Qiangwu** (China) said that he fully supported the statement made by the Guyanese delegation and that many developing countries wished to make statements on the issue under consideration owing to the importance they attached to the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. That importance would increase as the globalization process gained momentum.

35. In relation to section 9, his delegation was not sure whether there would be enough resources to implement, over the next two years, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

36. The Chinese delegation agreed with the view expressed by the Advisory Committee in paragraph IV.13 of its report, to the effect that coordination and related activities should be carried out by existing staff.

37. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that she associated herself with the statement made by the Guyanese delegation and that section 9 of the budget should be considered on the understanding that the activities it included had formerly been the responsibility of three different departments. In that connection, she recalled section III, paragraph 42, of General Assembly resolution 52/220, in which the Secretary-General had been requested to take into account, in proposing resources for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the need to provide all the resources necessary for the full implementation of all mandated programmes and activities previously performed by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services. The Cuban delegation was concerned to note the minimal increase in the funds proposed in relation to section 9, and pointed out that that might be tantamount to non-compliance with General Assembly resolution 52/220.

38. The Cuban delegation fully supported the recommendations of CPC. It was surprised that, after the streamlining carried out under section 9 in the context of the reform of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General had proposed such a small increase in the regular budget and a decrease in extrabudgetary funds,

instead of proposing an overall increase in all the resources for that section.

39. The Cuban delegation felt that the activities related to economic coercive measures imposed on developing countries, included in subprogramme 8 under section 9, should be moved to subprogramme 7, in which they had been included previously.

40. In relation to the support which, according to paragraph 9.8 of the proposed programme budget, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs would provide to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs in his function as convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Cuban delegation wished to know what had been done thus far.

41. With respect to table 9.2, it was disturbing to note the decline in extrabudgetary resources projected for the coming biennium. The Secretariat should explain how it intended to ensure the implementation of all mandates related to that section with such a reduced resource base.

42. With respect to technical cooperation activities, the Secretariat should provide further details on what activities had been implemented and how many posts had been linked to those activities.

43. The Cuban delegation noted that, as explained in paragraph 9.45 of the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General had decided to strengthen support to the Administrative Committee on Coordination through the establishment of an Office for Inter-Agency Affairs. It wondered why the establishment of that Office had not been considered in the context of document A/52/303, which dealt with all the budget implications of the reform proposal.

44. The Cuban delegation asked the Secretariat to describe the new and expanded functions, referred to in paragraph 9.46, which had been assigned to the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs in support of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary machinery.

45. **Mr. Jara** (Chile) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the Guyanese delegation and that section 9, as one of the most important budget sections for the Organization, must be given adequate funds to ensure the implementation of all the mandates pertaining to it, yet the proposed funding level did not appear to meet that criterion.

46. Specifically, his delegation attached particular importance to the financing of the special session to be held in 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

47. **Mr. Gallardo** (Bolivia) said that he supported the statement made by the Guyanese delegation and that the Organization should have adequate resources to carry out its activities without hindrance. The increase in regular budget resources was insignificant compared to current global requirements, and the decline in extrabudgetary resources was alarming.

48. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, was very important, and that he was pleased to note the expected accomplishment mentioned in paragraph 9.58 of the proposed programme budget, to the effect that substantive support to that Committee would be strengthened. The activities of civil society could have a positive effect on the Organization's work. In that connection, he pointed out that the Committee's workload had increased substantially and that it had received over 300 applications.

49. **Mr. Nyamiobo** (Kenya) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the Guyanese delegation and that the developing countries felt that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was the Organization's most important department, especially in view of paragraph 9.121, which referred to the expected accomplishment of improving the capacity of national statistical offices to perform more effectively their functions, particularly that of reporting correctly on national accounts.

50. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that it must be borne in mind that the proposed 0.3-per-cent increase in regular budget resources for the section, which appeared in table 9.2, did not include the programme to combat desertification; the overall resource growth, including that programme, was 1.8 per cent. That programme had been excluded because, while it had not been interrupted as an activity, it had become the responsibility of a treaty body, based in Bonn, that had operated since January 1999 on the basis of assessments. The extrabudgetary resources available in 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 had been transferred to that body; that accounted for a good portion of the

reduction in extrabudgetary resources observed under section 9. The remaining programme resources had been redistributed among other programmes of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as shown in table 9.8.

51. Also in relation to extrabudgetary resources, the figures presented were conservative projections made on the basis of commitments that were considered reliable. Those data were therefore more uncertain than those for the current biennium. In general, additional pledges and actual contributions were received in the course of the biennium, so that comparisons between the current biennium and projections for a future biennium could give a distorted view. Thus, the situation with respect to extrabudgetary resources was not as bad as it seemed at first glance.

52. Table 9.6 showed an apparently large increase (134 per cent) under the item on travel costs in relation to executive direction and management. Paragraph 9.54 explained that most of the increase was due to the implementation of decisions concerning panels of eminent personalities and experts to be held in conjunction with the sessions of the Second and Third Committees and the Economic and Social Council. Another large part of the increase was for the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, since the resources from the preceding biennium had been insufficient.

53. With respect to the questions on the resources for the special sessions and activities to be conducted in the biennium 2000-2001, the usual practice was to provide for the relevant resources and then to transfer them to other programmes once the activities had been carried out; that was the case of the activities in follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, and so forth.

54. As to the frequency of the sessions of the Committee for Development Policy, that Committee held one session a year; the resources proposed would therefore have to be adjusted.

55. The high vacancy rates continued to have serious negative effects on the Secretariat; in 1998, and to a lesser degree in 1999, they had been higher than the rates budgeted. There had been some improvement, which would be documented in the second budget performance report for the current biennium. Attempts to solve the problem had been thwarted by the complex procedures established, in some cases by resolutions, for filling posts. That situation had not improved in recent years; rather, it had become even more complicated.

56. With respect to the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs, one delegation had asked why all the necessary resources for that Office had not been provided for on the basis of the Secretary-General's report on reform measures (A/52/303). In fact, the calculation had been inadequate and it had been necessary to allocate more resources.

57. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) reiterated her request for information on the approach taken to the implementation of the mandates that came under the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs, so that the Committee could determine whether the resources allocated were adequate. She also asked, in relation to subprogramme 5, why a unit for statistical activities in Geneva had been closed, as indicated in paragraph 9.123, and to what structure its functions had been transferred. Moreover, she reiterated the need to allocate more resources to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat, which was also pointed out by CPC in paragraph 182 of its report (A/54/16).

58. After observing that paragraph 9.167 was an example of a recurrent request for resources to fund external printing of a number of publications, she asked what policy was followed by the Organization in deciding when to use and when not to use in-house document reproduction services.

59. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), referring to the last question, said that the basic policy was that documents were reproduced in-house whenever possible. However, there were technical limitations, such as the need to use glossy or colour materials, binding or photographs. Parliamentary documentation was given high priority for in-house printing, but an attempt was made to do as many other jobs as possible in-house. As in-house capacity improved, there was a steady decline in the use of external printing services.

60. The statistical unit in Geneva had consisted of one P-3 post and two General Service posts, and the work it had carried out was currently done by a single unit located in New York. Technology had eliminated the need for a statistical unit in Geneva.

Section 10. Africa: New Agenda for Development

61. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, reaffirmed the priority which the General Assembly assigned to African development in the medium-term plan and in the relevant resolutions. Accordingly, the New Agenda should be financed from the regular budget. The Group of 77 and China felt that the programme of work under section 10 should be more action-oriented and should focus on achieving economic growth and sustainable development in Africa through the promotion of activities in the field instead of using the scarce resources available to campaign for the cause of Africa.

62. The Group of 77 and China were deeply concerned about the inadequacy of the resources for section 10 and felt that a larger appropriation was needed. They requested the Secretary-General, as a matter of urgency, to initiate the preparatory process for the final review and appraisal, in 2002, of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/32. In that context, they requested the re-establishment of the programme on Africa within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) so that a specific programme on Africa would be in place to carry out any new strategy or plan which the United Nations might adopt to succeed the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

63. **Mr. Getachew** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Ethiopia attached great importance to the activities under section 10, and took note of the 14.9-per-cent increase in the overall resource requirement for the biennium 2000-2001. It supported the request for four new posts, contained in paragraphs 10.22 to 10.24 of the proposed programme budget and endorsed by the Advisory Committee and CPC. In view of the significant percentage of resources to be used to engage consultants and experts, Ethiopia emphasized that equitable geographical representation should be given due consideration so as to provide opportunities for the promotion of African professionals.

64. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The objective of African development, which had been reaffirmed as a priority many times by the General Assembly, deserved particular attention. In that connection, he regretted that the overview of budget section 10 did not refer to General Assembly resolution 53/90, which concerned the New Agenda.

65. While the New Agenda should serve as a basis for more active and concrete operational activities in the field, that objective did not conflict with the original conception of the New Agenda as a catalyst and as a means of coordinating and promoting activities throughout the United Nations system for the development of Africa. In that context, considering that information campaigns on Africa had not had much impact, there was an imbalance in the distribution of resources among the three subprogrammes. He would like some clarification on that subject.

66. Algeria endorsed the recommendation of CPC that reference should be made to the Cairo Agenda for Action, under which African States themselves determined their priorities for the proposed programme budget.

67. Since the New Agenda was the joint responsibility of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information, Algeria hoped that the programme's direction would be clear and coordinated.

68. Lastly, he supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General's requests for posts should be accepted. Consideration should be given to the possibility of allocating more resources for the implementation of more concrete and relevant activities.

69. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Uganda attached great importance to section 10 and welcomed, in particular, the activities planned in the area of cooperation between Asia and Africa in the transfer of technology; it hoped that that type of cooperation could be extended to other parts of the world.

70. In view of the frequent use of consultants, he asked the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division whether that practice reflected a lack

of in-house expertise; if not, the resources spent on consultants could be allocated to other activities.

71. Uganda appreciated the publication of *Africa Recovery*; however, since other units dealing with Africa also issued their own publications, he asked whether all of them could be combined into a single publication to save money. He also asked what impact the various publications had had, in the opinion of the units that produced them.

72. In general terms, Uganda supported the Secretary-General's requests for posts. In that connection, it would like to know why some posts which had been financed from extrabudgetary resources were to be financed from the regular budget.

73. Lastly, in view of the large number of meetings and conferences planned, Uganda felt that the active support of the African States and sufficient resources were essential for achieving practical results.

74. **Mr. El-Ghazali** (Sudan) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He wished to comment on paragraph 10.3 under budget section 10, Africa: New Agenda for Development, particularly in relation to the overall goal of the programme, which was "to mobilize the support ... of the international community ... through an increased flow of financial resources". That phrase should be clarified to ensure that there was no discrimination among States and that the programme's benefits were not linked to any political conditionalities.

75. Paragraph IV.29 of the Advisory Committee's report indicated that, in the proposed programme budget, the Secretary-General estimated requirements of $6,013,100, before recosting, for the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; that represented an increase of 14.9 per cent over the amount for the current biennium, which was a very small increase considering that the qualification "before recosting" meant that most of that difference would have to be used to offset the effects of inflation.

76. **Mr. Nee** (United States of America) said that the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa was the most practical means of advancing the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. He questioned the usefulness of maintaining offices and programmes that seemed to be responsible for activities similar to those carried out by the secretariat of the Special Initiative, which were fully supported by the United States. In view of that apparent duplication of effort, the United States did not feel that the activities described under section 10 added anything new, and did not support an increase in the amount of resources allocated to them.

77. **Mr. Peixoto** (Brazil) said that he fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He supported the priority which the Organization assigned to Africa, particularly since social and economic development problems were at the root of the conflicts plaguing many African countries.

78. The budgetary requests submitted by the Secretariat reflected, to a large extent, existing mandates, and should be approved with the adjustments suggested by CPC.

79. Section 10 was another budget section in which extrabudgetary resources had dwindled. Considering that the Secretary-General's proposal included additional posts financed from the regular budget, Brazil would prefer that those posts should represent a net increase and not merely a means of offsetting the loss of some extrabudgetary funds. With that in mind, Brazil supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the General Assembly should accept the requests for posts.

80. **Mr. Kondo** (Japan) said that his delegation reaffirmed and strongly supported the priority which the General Assembly assigned to African development, although the activities to be carried out under section 10 should be more oriented towards obtaining tangible results.

81. Japan would be willing to consider constructively the proposals to establish new posts under subprogrammes 2 and 3 if the Secretariat would provide further clarification of their functions. In particular, Japan was not fully convinced of the need to develop a database such as the one described under subprogramme 3, in view of existing information media, particularly within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Japan looked forward to the Secretariat's proposals on the possible consolidation of publications on Africa, as suggested by the Ugandan delegation.

82. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that she associated herself with the statement made by the

representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In view of the priority which the General Assembly assigned to activities under section 10, adequate resources must be provided to ensure the fulfilment of the mandates under which those activities had been established. Cuba reaffirmed its ongoing, unwavering and sincere commitment to African development, particularly the promotion of a supportive framework for African development efforts and South-South cooperation. It therefore supported the Secretary-General's resource requests and suggested that, in some cases, consideration should be given to the possibility of increasing them, in view of the projected decline in extrabudgetary resources.

83. She shared the concern expressed by other delegations about expenditure for consultants, and looked forward to the Secretariat's replies to the questions posed.

84. Cuba remained concerned about the tendency, observed in section 10 and other sections of the proposed budget, to use extrabudgetary resources to finance activities mandated by the General Assembly. It therefore looked forward to the Secretariat's replies to the questions posed in that connection.

85. **Mr. Kelapile** (Botswana) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The 14.9-per-cent increase in regular budget resources over the amount for the current biennium was appropriate in view of the priority given to African development in the medium-term plan. Botswana joined the delegations which had suggested that consideration should be given to the possibility of increasing those resources. It also supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the requests for posts should be accepted.

86. Botswana underscored the importance of ensuring that mandated activities were financed from the regular budget, taking into account the obligations of Member States under Article 17 of the Charter and the unpredictable nature of extrabudgetary resources.

87. **Mr. Daka** (Zambia) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The resources allocated to section 10 should be increased. He fully agreed with the recommendation made by CPC in paragraph 192 (a) of its report, as well as the Advisory Committee's recommendation that new posts should be established (A/54/7, para. IV.31).

88. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Ghana had taken note of the 14.9-per-cent increase proposed for section 10 and felt that, considering the decline in extrabudgetary resources, the implementation of activities would be seriously compromised. Therefore, the necessary steps should be taken to ensure that mandates were fully implemented.

89. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Israel supported the priority which the international community had decided to assign to the development of the African countries. Pursuant to that decision, it was urgently necessary to increase the resources allocated to section 10 of the budget.

90. **Mr. Ekorong A Dong** (Cameroon) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Cameroon supported the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and welcomed the fact that section 10 showed a 14.9-per-cent increase in relation to the appropriation for the biennium 1998-1999. However, considering the projected decline in extrabudgetary resources, the regular budget appropriation should be increased even more.

91. Cameroon supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph IV.31 of its report, and asked for more information on criteria for promotion.

92. Cameroon also supported paragraphs 187 and 189 of the report of CPC.

93. **Ms. Sun Minqin** (China) said that she supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and that she wished to reiterate her country's support for African development. China noted that the international community had decided to give top priority to African development, and hoped that words would be translated into actions.

94. **Mr. Osewa** (Nigeria) said that he supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The manner in which the expected accomplishments were set forth in

section 10 of the budget was too vague and ambiguous. In principle, the programme's objectives were accelerated economic growth for poverty reduction and further integration of Africa into the global economy. The specific objectives, however, were not precisely defined. His delegation asked whether a revision had been made.

95. **Ms. Achouri** (Tunisia) said that her country attached great importance to the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and that it supported the recommendations of CPC and the Advisory Committee with respect to section 10.

96. First, Tunisia wished to stress that budget section 10 placed too much emphasis on extrabudgetary resources, which, as everyone knew, were unpredictable. It was important to bear in mind the principle of the international community's collective responsibility for financing activities which the General Assembly considered priorities. Second, Tunisia felt that adequate resources must be provided for the implementation of operational activities for development. Thus far, studies and advocacy efforts had been undertaken, but no financing had been provided for activities having a direct impact on African development or on the capacity of the African countries to advance their own development.

97. It seemed that the relationship between the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was not clear. The Special Initiative did not appear in the medium-term plan or in the programme budget. At its thirty-eighth session, CPC had decided that the Special Initiative should become the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa for the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; that decision had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly. That was a substantive change that affected the very nature of the activities under the Special Initiative, which had come to be identified with those under the New Agenda. It should be clear that the Special Initiative could not replace the New Agenda; it was simply an instrument for the latter's implementation and, in the future, could become an instrument for the implementation of any other programme or strategy that might replace the New Agenda.

98. **Mr. Mazemo** (Zimbabwe) said that he associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana and that he fully agreed with the explanations presented by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 10.22 to 10.24 of the proposed budget, in relation to additional post requirements. It was necessary to strengthen the capacity of the Economic Commission for Africa, at the subregional and national level, and of the Department of Public Information, which played a crucial role in raising public awareness of the serious economic situation in Africa and the steps taken by African and other countries to promote economic recovery and sustainable development on the continent. His delegation therefore strongly supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations on staffing increases, and observed with satisfaction that some delegations had expressed a willingness to consider that proposal with an open mind.

99. **Mr. Sareva** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and, in addition, Norway, said that the European Union, which reaffirmed its commitment to the development of Africa, had noted with appreciation the increase in resources for the New Agenda, and hoped that, in future, the objectives of the programme would be better reflected in the statement of expected accomplishments. The New Agenda had to do with the overall coordination of all United Nations development activities in Africa and with the mobilization of international support for African development. As such, it could not be replaced by any other programme. The European Union reiterated that it welcomed the favourable response received from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to its proposal to hold, in April 2000, a summit of heads of State and government of the European Union and Africa.

100. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as indicated in table 10.1 of the proposed budget, a reduction in extrabudgetary resources was being proposed for the biennium 2000-2001. In dividing resources among the three subprogrammes under section 10, the Division had been aware that some of the resources would not be available in the next biennium.

101. In relation to the questions on how the balance among the subprogrammes had been determined, the Committee must bear in mind that subprogramme 1

was the responsibility of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, which operated under the direction of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; subprogramme 2 was implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa; and subprogramme 3, by the Department of Public Information. The Division had felt that subprogramme 1, which was the largest of the three, did not need as much strengthening as the others because it had a more stable resource base; subprogramme 2 needed considerable support, and had been strengthened most because extrabudgetary resources had not been reduced; and subprogramme 3 needed regular budget resources to offset the decline in extrabudgetary resources so that the Department of Public Information could continue to publish *Africa Recovery*, an award-winning publication with a wide readership.

102. In that connection, referring to the comments made by some delegations on the possible duplication of work, he said that the Division had considered carefully the proposals put forward by the three entities and had decided that each one should evaluate the programmes of the other two to ensure that there was no duplication. Each publication targeted a different audience, and the degree of technicality varied from one publication to another. For example, the publications of the Department of Public Information were intended for a much wider audience than the one that read the publication of the Economic Commission for Africa (the *United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa* newsletter, which was directed towards organizations of the United Nations system). The Office of the Special Coordinator published the *Overview of African Development* and the *Study on Overall Resource Flows to Africa*. Thus, they formed a set of complementary publications, each of which reflected the area of expertise of the entity that published it.

103. It should be recalled that the New Agenda was not operational in nature, but oriented towards fund-raising, public awareness-raising and the promotion of development through advocacy efforts. That did not mean that cooperation among the three subprogrammes could not be strengthened.

104. With respect to posts, four regular budget posts had been added and three extrabudgetary posts had been eliminated, meaning that the number of posts had risen from 27 to 28.

105. With respect to the hiring of consultants and experts for activities under section 10, over half of the $770,000 proposed for that purpose was for ad hoc groups of experts, while the rest was for individual experts. Considering the level of expertise needed to meet the programme's requirements, it was illogical to expect that in-house experts could cover all disciplines; it was therefore necessary to hire external consultants for short periods. The system was quite flexible and was used infrequently, although, in the specific case under consideration, its use was appropriate and necessary.

106. With respect to inflation, the methodology used for those calculations was the same as the one used for the other sections of the proposed programme budget.

107. He would reply orally or in writing, as appropriate, to other questions in the informal consultations.

108. **Mr. Ekorong A Dong** (Cameroon) said, in relation to the indication that the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division would reply, in informal consultations, to his delegation's request for a more detailed explanation of the criteria for promotion within the staffing structure, that his delegation would have liked to receive a reply from the highest official of the structure.

Section 11A. Trade and development

109. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that UNCTAD was the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and related issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. The tenth session of UNCTAD, which would have the theme "Developmental strategies in an increasingly interdependent world: applying the lessons of the past to make globalization an effective instrument for the development of all countries and all people", would be critical for fashioning the developing countries' development policies and strategies in the coming decades, and the success of the process would depend on the support of the international community. The Fifth Committee should ensure that its consideration of section 11A sent a clear, positive and supportive signal to the preparatory process for that event.

110. UNCTAD had always been a competent and faithful pillar of support to developing countries. Its

excellent substantive work helped them to better understand the implications of international trade, financial and monetary trends, as well as flows of resources and technology, for their development prospects. The developing countries members of the Group of 77 and China felt that such an understanding of economic processes was indispensable for the formulation of effective national and international development agendas, policies and strategies. In addition, the support provided by UNCTAD to developing countries in issues related to trade negotiations was essential for achieving balanced, equitable and feasible outcomes in multilateral trade arrangements. UNCTAD had also provided developing countries with technical assistance in critical areas such as debt management, commercial diplomacy, trade facilitation, investment, customs simplification, supply capacity-building and transit transport, especially in Africa, least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries. Those activities in support of developing countries were one of the keys to the successful exploitation by developing countries of the opportunities arising from globalization and to the mitigation of its negative consequences. UNCTAD was unrivalled in that area, and the Group of 77 and China strongly supported its continuation and strengthening.

111. If the United Nations was serious about helping developing countries to integrate themselves rapidly and in an equitable and beneficial manner into the globalizing world economy and the international trading system, it must support UNCTAD by providing it with a sufficient level of resources. That was one of the key priorities of the Group of 77 and China at the current session; they were therefore seriously concerned about the drastic reductions in the level of resources under section 11A. Between 1996-1997 and 1998-1999, the appropriation for UNCTAD had been reduced from $110.2 million to $93.2 million, with adverse consequences for UNCTAD. For example, the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries had been put in charge of the preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, even though it had only 10 Professional staff members, in addition to its ongoing activities in relation to least developed, landlocked and small island developing States. The abolition of a D-2 post that had been in charge of coordinating the management of all UNCTAD activities to improve efficiency had reduced the Organization's capacity to monitor and coordinate activities throughout the Secretariat. The situation had been worsened by the elimination of the post of Coordinator for Africa within UNCTAD. The Group of 77 and China were concerned to note that the contribution of UNCTAD to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had dwindled significantly because of the abolition of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and of the post of its Coordinator after the eighth session of UNCTAD. Accordingly, the Group of 77 and China requested the re-establishment of the Programme within the UNCTAD budget with an adequate level of human and financial resources.

112. The Group of 77 and China emphasized that efforts to strengthen the Office of the Special Coordinator should give equal importance to the provision of resources to landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries. They concurred with the Advisory Committee's observation that the resources proposed under subprogramme 5 were unrealistic, and supported its recommendation that the workload of the Office of the Special Coordinator should be reviewed. They hoped that the work programme of UNCTAD would include the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

113. UNCTAD should be given additional resources, from savings achieved in the current biennium or from other sources, in four major areas: (a) support for African countries in trade-related issues through the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and other measures; (b) assistance to developing countries in multilateral trade negotiations following the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), to be held in Seattle in November and December 1999; (c) preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; and (d) support for developing countries in regional and global preparations for the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development to be held in 2001. The Group of 77 and China were raising those issues against the backdrop of resolution 53/170, in which the General Assembly requested

UNCTAD to provide support to developing countries for trade negotiations and dispute settlement, and reiterated its request to UNCTAD to continue its contribution to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, taking into account the agreed conclusions of the Trade and Development Board. In its resolution 52/187, the General Assembly had decided to designate UNCTAD as the focal point for the preparation of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, while CPC had recommended, in its report on the work of its thirty-ninth session (A/54/16), that UNCTAD should assist the developing countries in preparing for the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development to be held in 2001. The Group of 77 and China would continue to focus on the provision of adequate regular budget resources for the effective implementation of those activities in the coming biennium.

114. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that she associated herself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana and that ASEAN reaffirmed the importance it attached to the role of UNCTAD as the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and related issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, which the General Assembly had also reaffirmed repeatedly, most recently in its resolution 53/170.

115. ASEAN was pleased to note that paragraph 11A.1 indicated that the main objective of UNCTAD for the biennium would be to maximize the trade and development opportunities of developing countries and to assist them to face the challenges of, and derive the maximum benefits from, the process of globalization. ASEAN thanked the Government of Thailand, which, as an expression of its firm belief in the importance of UNCTAD, had offered to host the tenth session of UNCTAD in February 2000, despite the financial constraints it faced.

116. ASEAN supported the conclusions and recommendations put forward by CPC in paragraphs 213 to 218 of its report and attached particular importance to the recommendation that the UNCTAD secretariat should continue to participate in and provide support to the preparatory process of the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development as well as to assist the developing countries in that regard. UNCTAD should continue to assist the African countries in the follow-up of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

117. ASEAN attached particular importance to subprogramme 5 concerning least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and to the valuable work being done by the Office of the Special Coordinator. In that regard, it concurred with the Advisory Committee's observations, in paragraphs IV.38 and IV.39 of its report, that the capacity of the Office of the Special Coordinator had not been addressed satisfactorily and that the resources proposed under subprogramme 5 were unrealistic, in view of the workload arising from paragraphs 11A.69, 11A.73 and 11A.76 of the proposed programme budget.

118. ASEAN feared that the budget reductions experienced by UNCTAD in recent years were adversely affecting its capacity to implement effectively and efficiently its mandated programmes and activities, and supported the modest increase in resources proposed for the next biennium in relation to the revised appropriation for the biennium 1998-1999.

119. ASEAN agreed that technical cooperation activities should focus on capacity-building and human resources development, as indicated in paragraph 11A.6. In the light of the current economic crises in some parts of the world, attention should also be paid to the development of skills training, human resources development in small and medium-sized enterprises and skills development for disadvantaged groups.

120. **Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the work of UNCTAD, particularly its critical analytical studies on key areas of development and technical cooperation, was of the highest importance for developing countries in general and landlocked developing countries in particular. As the only body at the central level that dealt with issues of transit transport, UNCTAD had made valuable efforts, despite serious resource constraints, to support landlocked developing countries in that area, as witnessed by the success of the fourth Meeting of Governmental Experts from Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, which had taken place in August 1999. He looked forward to the effective implementation of the

outcome of the Meeting, in which UNCTAD would have a critical role to play.

121. When UNCTAD had been downsized after its ninth session, held in 1996, the level of resources allocated to the work on landlocked developing countries had been drastically reduced; as a result, only one Professional post remained in the Office of the Special Coordinator to carry out activities on landlocked developing countries. The international community should take immediate action to reverse the massive reduction in the staff of UNCTAD prior to its tenth session. He called for the substantial strengthening of the Office of the Special Coordinator in relation to activities concerning transit transport. The development prospects of landlocked developing countries depended critically on the availability and efficient use of transit transport facilities. In that connection, the Fifth Committee should make its own contribution to the efforts of UNCTAD by providing the Office of the Special Coordinator with the requisite capacity and resources for its work on landlocked developing countries.

122. Many landlocked developing countries were also least developed countries. The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would take place in Brussels in 2001. Currently, the Office of the Special Coordinator, in addition to carrying out its regular activities, must deal with the preparations for the Conference with only 10 Professional staff; that was a poor reflection of the importance which the international community should attach to the Conference. Those considerations clearly justified the need to strengthen the capacity and increase the resources of the Office.

123. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said that the participants in the ninth Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held in 1999, had emphasized the importance of making adequate preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. In that connection, the Advisory Committee, in paragraph IV.38 of its report, had stated that it was not convinced that the capacity of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries to coordinate the activities and programmes of those countries had been addressed satisfactorily, and had recommended that the Secretary-General of UNCTAD should review the workload of the Office. The Office's workload would be particularly heavy in the context of the preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the tenth session of UNCTAD and the third Ministerial Conference of WTO. For those activities, the Office of the Special Coordinator had 10 Professional posts, only 7 of which were currently filled (in 1990, when the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries had been held, the Office had had 38 Professional posts). The staffing of the Office of the Special Coordinator should be strengthened. Moreover, he would strongly support the re-establishment, within UNCTAD, of a special unit for least developed, landlocked and island developing countries.

Section 12. Environment

Section 14. Crime prevention and criminal justice

Section 15. International drug control

124. **Mr. Sareva** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and, in addition, Norway, said that he supported the reform efforts aimed at achieving better coordination and interplay among various environmental conventions. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should play a key role in that area. The European Union, which welcomed the consensus reached and would work for the effective implementation of the reform, supported action to enhance the effectiveness of UNEP, particularly the efforts of the Executive Director to that end. The voluntary contributions of States members of the European Union to the UNEP Environment Fund represented more than 70 per cent of the budget.

125. The European Union supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation that steps should be taken to determine more accurately the level of services which the United Nations Office at Nairobi was required to provide to the organizations at Nairobi and the rates at which the cost of those services was reimbursed. It noted that, in the proposed programme budget, the administrative functions within that Office had been reinforced.

126. With respect to budget sections 14 and 15, concerning the two priority programmes Crime prevention and criminal justice and International drug

control, the European Union supported the resource increases proposed for the two sections. In future budget proposals, efforts should be made to increase the level of resources for those sections. Extrabudgetary resources represented 93 per cent of the total resources available to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (section 15). The programme under section 14 was an example of successful streamlining of programmes of work. The European Union welcomed the efforts of Member States and of the Secretariat to prioritize the agenda of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the respective mandates of the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention. Adequate resources must be provided for the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which would be held in Vienna in 2000 and would represent a challenge for the Centre. The European Union welcomed the recommendations of CPC on modifying the narratives of sections 14 and 15. Both sections should fully reflect the Secretariat's efforts to mainstream a gender perspective.

127. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said, in relation to section 15, International drug control, that his country gave top priority to the implementation of the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. Illicit drug trafficking had a destructive effect on society and undermined State institutions. That problem had also damaged relations within the international community. The United Nations should be given the responsibility of coordinating strategies and efforts to end that scourge. After having examined section 15 of the budget, the Mexican delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee and supported the Secretary-General's request for resources in the proposed budget. It also supported the conclusions and recommendations of CPC.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.